

OXFORD EAGLE (MS)
12 October 1982

Extra-curricular spying¹

If a college professor gives advice to a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) official, the professor's ~~students~~ do not have an automatic right to know about it.

This is the decision of three judges ruling on a lawsuit brought by a University of California at Los Angeles student. The student had filed the suit under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act.

THERE ARE several reasons to support such a decision. First, even academics have a right to privacy. If a professor lends his expertise to the CIA or aids in recruiting outside the classroom, that is not necessarily any of his student's business.

The agency would be hindered if it could not seek outside advice from a professor without the whole world knowing about it.

What is more, any faculty member who did help out the CIA might actually be endangered if it were known he was assisting the agency.

THERE IS A natural fear by some in the academic community that such contacts might create a conflict of interest, but that need not happen. A scholar can give advice to a government agency without becoming a propagandist for the agency. Besides, only a foolish student uncritically absorbs all his teachers' views. The chief function of a good education is to teach students to think, to question, to examine.

If a student has learned this well, he will not easily be swayed by professorial opinions not backed by fact.